

**Fast Letter 12-16, Revision of VA Form 21-22, *Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative*, June 20, 2012**

This Fast Letter implements changes required by 38 CFR 14.631(a). Specifically, a service organization representative must accept the appointment, in writing, of a Power of Attorney before it is legally binding on the service organization and the VA. VA revised its Form 21-22 in January 2012 to include a signature block for this purpose.

There are at least two problems which must be addressed by Department Service Officers immediately:

**Education of CVSO's and PSO's**

FL 12-16 was issued without advance notice to VSO's. Although we knew this change was coming, we did not know the date it would take effect. As a consequence, the effective date of the change, June 20, 2012, took many service officers by surprise.

**"The latest version of the VA Form 21-22 is dated February 2012. Due to significant revisions to the VA Form 21-22, prior versions of the form will no longer be accepted as of the date of this letter. Prior versions of the form that were processed and placed in claims folders prior to the date of this letter remain valid."**

Department Service Officers **must make every effort** to ensure that all VFW accredited representatives within your Department (e.g., county veteran service officers; PSO's) comply fully with this change. The current version of VA Form 21-22 can be found at: <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-22-ARE.pdf>

**Required E-Mail address**

Page 2, paragraph 1 of FL 12-16 states that Block 3C of the new form requires the E-Mail address of the organization named in block 3A.

**"Do not update BIRLS or any other VA electronic system with the VSO's appointment unless the VA Form 21-22 contains a VSO signature. Items 3A through 3C and 17 and 18 MUST be completed in order for the VA Form 21-22 to be valid."**

**DO NOT USE ANY GENERAL VFW E-MAIL ADDRESS.**

If you have not done so already, ask VA to create a VFW email account for your office. Ensure that you have the authority to provide access to at least one other staff member in your office. Once established, this should be the email address shown in Block 3C. It will be your responsibility to check the VFW email account daily in order to evaluate and respond, as appropriate, to any emails which appear in that account. In your absence, one or more members of your staff should check that account at least once a day and respond to those emails as appropriate.

We have learned that VA announced today that it would delay enforcement of the requirements of FL 12-16 for 30-60 days so that service officers have the time to educate CVSO's and others about these changes. DSO's must take action now to ensure that the new VA Form 21-22 is used and properly completed by all VFW accredited service officers in their jurisdiction.

Jerry Manar  
Deputy Director  
National Veterans Service  
Veterans of Foreign Wars